

NRLN Supports Bill To Stop Delays Of Generic Drugs

From the time that the National Retiree Legislative Network was founded in 2002, we have advocated in our Legislative Agenda there should be legislation that bans brand-name drug manufacturers from paying generic drug manufacturers to keep their generic brands off the market. Last week, Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) and Senator Charles "Chuck" Grassley (R-IA) introduced The Preserve Access to Affordable Generics Act (S. 369). The NRLN supports this bill that would make it illegal for brand-name pharmaceutical companies to pay makers of generic drugs to delay in bringing their cheaper drugs to market.

These so-called "pay-for-delay" deals are unfortunately all too common among larger pharmaceutical companies. Their actions end up costing consumers by denying them access to lower-priced generic drugs. (I was pleased to read last week that The Federal Trade Commission has filed suit in federal court in an attempt to block a deal in which a manufacturer of a brand-name drug paid three competitors to delay rolling out cheaper generic versions of the drug.)

I have placed below the text of a letter that I have faxed to Senator Kohl commending him for introducing S.369. A similar letter was faxed to Senator Grassley. You will notice near the end of the letter that I stated Marta Bascom, NRLN Executive Director in Washington, D.C. would contact Senator Kohl's staff to learn what the NRLN can do to do to advance S. 369 toward passage in the Senate and gain the introduction of a companion bill in the U.S. House.

If it is determined that it would be beneficial at this time for NRLN Grassroots Members to send emails to, and call on, their U.S. Senators to support S. 369, I will let you know what action the NRLN would like for you to take.

News articles have reported that it is expected that President Barack Obama would support the legislation if it came to his desk needing his signature in order to become law. Therefore, if we can motivate the Senate and House to pass the bill, we have a very good chance of gaining an important aspect of the NRLN's Legislative Agenda.

While we determine our best course of action, please help us to continue to grow our Grassroots Network by encouraging your friends to sign up at <http://capwiz.com/abtr/mlm/signup/> . Also encourage them to become an Individual Contributing Member of the NRLN. Details are available on the NRLN website at www.nrln.org . Just tell them to click on the "Join Us" tab at the top of the home page.

I should add that the NRLN has taken a major growth step during the last few weeks with the addition of the two retiree associations-the Delta Pilots Pension Preservation Organization (DP3) and the Delta Air Lines Retirement Committee (DALRC). The combination of the DP3 and DALRC associations adds to the NRLN family 46,000 retirees, 18,000 association members, 15,000 Grassroots Network members with email and Capwiz access. While strength in numbers is critical, also important is the diversity of the retirees from major industries the NRLN represents. This adds to our credibility on Capitol Hill.

Bill Kadereit,
President, National Retiree Legislative Network

February 9, 2009

The Honorable Herb Kohl
United States Senate
330 Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington, D.C. 20510-4903

Dear Senator Kohl:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 2 million members represented by the National Retiree Legislative Network to commend you and Senator Grassley for the introduction of The Preserve Access to Affordable Generics Act (S. 369). As you have recognized, this legislation is sorely needed to prohibit brand-name drug manufacturers from using pay-off agreements to keep cheaper generic equivalents off the market.

America's consumers-especially retirees on fixed incomes-should not have to pay the exorbitant prices for brand-name prescription drugs when a qualified generic could be made available. According to the most recent data available from the Kaiser Family Foundation, the average brand-name prescription drug cost \$120 in 2007. That was up from \$111 in 2006. We all know that drug prices have risen even more since 2007.

The average generic in 2007 was \$34, according to Kaiser. These days a person can buy generic drugs for as little as \$4 for a 30-day supply at WalMart or Target, and many other retailers are offering similar steep discounts.

Senator Kohl, the NRLN agrees with your statement on your website that, "It's time to stop these drug company pay-for-delay deals that only serve the profits of the companies involved and deny consumers access to affordable generic drugs."

From the time that the NRLN was founded in 2002, we have advocated in our legislative agenda there should be legislation that bans brand-name drug manufacturers from paying generic drug manufacturers to keep their generic brands off the market. Marta Bascom, the NRLN's Executive Director in Washington, D.C., will contact your staff to learn what the NRLN can do to advance S. 369 toward passage in the Senate and gain the introduction of a companion bill in the U.S. House. Marta can be reached on 703-863-9611.

I want to thank you and the members of the Senate Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy, and Consumer Rights for your efforts to eliminate the anti-competitive practices in the pharmaceutical industry in order to help Americans have their dollars go further in the purchases of their essential medicines.

Sincerely,
Signed, Bill Kadereit
President, National Retiree Legislative Network

If you no longer wish to receive e-mail from us, please click [here](#).

powered by
capwizxc